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9. SIGHTING OF EASTERN IMPERIAL EAGLE *AQUILA HELIACA* FROM MUMBAI, MAHARASHTRA

The Eastern Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*) was reported from Maharashtra for the first time in 1983 (Goenka *et al.* 1985). This is the second record of the species from the State and first record from Mumbai. On both the occasions an adult was recorded.

I observed an Eastern Imperial Eagle soaring over mangroves and open fields at Mahul village in Mumbai on December 13, 2001 at 1530 hrs. It was a dark blackish-brown bird with a pale crown and nape patch and white scapular patches. It could not be confused with the Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* as its wings were held parallel to the body and not dihedral while soaring. The other soaring birds present were Black Kite *Milvus migrans*, Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga* and Western Marsh-Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*. The Black Kites were seen mobbing the Eastern Imperial Eagle vigorously.

The Eastern Imperial Eagle is a globally threatened bird and categorized as Vulnerable (BirdLife International 2000). It

is described as a rare resident (?), but mainly winter visitor to the Indian subcontinent by Ali and Ripley (1983). Its distribution includes W. Pakistan (Baluchistan, Sind, North West Frontier Province), Nepal, north and northwest India (Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh) south to Gujarat (Kutch, Saurashtra). It has also been sighted in Rajasthan (Bharatpur and Kota) (Prakash 1988, Vyas 1993). This record indicates that its wintering range is extending towards Central India.

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10. STATUS OF WHITE-BELLIED SEA-EAGLE *HALIAEETUS LEUCOGASTER* IN SINDHUDURG DISTRICT, MAHARASHTRA

The White-bellied Sea-eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* is thinly, but widely distributed, and is listed as vulnerable in the Indian RED DATA BOOK. It is known to affect sea coast, tidal creeks and estuaries. The species is resident along the seaboard and offshore islands from c. 19° N of Mumbai down the west coast and up the east coast to Bangladesh, Laccadive Is. (now Lakshadweep), Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Sri Lanka. It is vagrant in Gujarat, and on the coasts of Burma (now Myanmar), Malay Peninsula and Archipelago east to Australia, Tasmania and W. Polynesia (Ali and Ripley 1981).

Gole (1997) reported 11 nests of the White-bellied Sea-eagle from the coast of Sindhudurg district, which is situated in the Konkan region of Maharashtra state (15° 35' N to 16° 33' N, 73° 18' E to 74° 13' E). This region experiences a hot and humid coastal climate with plentiful rain during monsoon, i.e.

June to September (average 3,000 mm). The temperatures range from 22 °C to 35 °C. The mean relative humidity is 80%.

During a status survey of the coasts in Sindhudurg district in 1999, we surveyed an area up to 5 km wide along the 121 km coastline. We located 32 nests of the White-bellied Sea-eagle; 62 nests were counted in Ratnagiri district in an earlier survey (Katdare and Mone 2003). Nesting sites of the White-bellied Sea-eagle were located while walking along the coast in the breeding season (October to January) and collecting information from the locals by showing them pictures of the bird.

Tree species

White-bellied sea-eagle nests were found on seven tree species (Table 1).